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Polish officials reaction

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All the Polish officials, including those from the incumbent government as well as former governments, strongly deny any CIA secret prisons have ever been installed in Poland.

Former President Kwasniewski said in early September: "There were never any CIA prisons in Poland, however Poland did collaborate with U.S. intelligence under the anti-terrorist coalition.... There was cooperation, which was a must if we wanted to combat terrorism. We couldn't let the Americans down in situations where they, say, needed to land here to fuel up planes. Fighting terrorism requires cooperation between intelligence services, and this did take place, as it still does today and will continue in the future".

Last December the then Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz said there were no secret prisons in Poland.

According to deputy PM and Interior Minister Ludwik Dorn and special services coordinator Zbigniew Wasserman, everything had already been said about the alleged CIA secret prisons in Poland. "There are no new facts on CIA prisons," they stressed.

While being firm on their position that such prisons were not in Poland, the Polish authorities are ready to cooperate with any official team to investigate this matter. Polish President Lech Kaczynski's aide Andrzej Krawczyk said that Kaczynski was ready to investigate the matter "if the circumstances were serious enough."

Polish media widely reported that a special commission of the European Parliament for alleged CIA prisons in Europe will visit Poland on November 7-9 to question ten Poles, including foreign minister Anna Fotyga, Wasserman, head of Sejm committee for special services Marek Biernacki, former heads of special services Andrzej Barcikowski and Zbigniew Siemiatkowski, and former defence minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski. It was also reported that the Dick Marty commission on CIA prisons found no evidence that any such prisons has existed. Gazeta Wyborcza cited Dick Marty as saying: "I found no

UNCLASSIFIED

formal evidence that European countries participated in this process,” but he adds that analyzing the fact leads one to such a conclusion.

Gazeta Wyborcza cites also Tom Malinowski, head of US. Charter of Human Rights Watch, who was among those indicating Poland as a possible detention center location. Now in a comment to the Dick Marty commission report, he says: “One cannot draw a conclusion on the existence of the prisons just on the basis of log flights. Maybe Dick Marty has not revealed some evidence, but I am not aware of any.” In November 2005, GW concludes, Human Rights Watch claimed they had evidence CIA secret prisons existed in Poland and Romania.

Polish media reaction:

“Exceptionally Dangerous Disclosure Of Secrets”

Jerzy Haszczyński wrote in centrist *Rzeczpospolita* (9/7): “CIA secret prisons are not secret any more. And we know it thanks to President Bush.... [The secret was revealed] when the fight with Islamic terror is not over and the threat of retaliatory attacks still exists.... I can hardly imagine that any civilized state would still wish to cooperate with American services on the most secret missions – which turn out to be temporarily secret. President Bush put the leaders of an allied country (or perhaps a few countries) in a very difficult situation. He confirmed that they had decided to expose their citizens to the revenge of terrorists – and to serious political consequences if they are an EU member.... Bush named no country – but what he said is certainly no help to Poland, America’s faithful ally. It can be expected that the European Commission and the Council of Europe would now demand with renewed energy explanations from Poland’s former and current authorities. The citizens of Poland might also demand such explanations.”

“Terrorists Die and Win”

Mariusz Ziomecki wrote in independent general interest *Przekroj* weekly (8/17):

“Alas, America along with the entire West is not winning the famous war on terror. President George W. Bush announced five years ago with such pomp. It is increasingly more evident that states – even the most affluent ones, with state-of-the-art global surveillance means, immeasurable weapons arsenals and much publicized special units – are fighting with a shadow. Large, hierarchic structures with complicated command and decision-taking systems are not able to constantly keep in check small groups of religiously motivated, educated and smart militants. A European country finds it hard to defend against an enemy who intends to die and is inconspicuous amidst a crowd of civilians.”

“In The Name Of War”

Andrzej Jonas wrote in military weekly *Polska Zbrojna* (8/17): “Terrorism has become a disease of today even though it has been known for ages. It has always deceptively taken on a social or ideological cloak to hide its nature. Baader-Meinhof Group, Red Brigades, Red Army Faction or the so-called Islamic terrorism, they all care nothing for common people whose interests they claim to stand for. The favorite aim of murderers, from Western airports to Iraqi streets, is to hit as many random victims as possible. The goal will always be easy to find because what matters is the method, not the goal.”

“Poland And The Marty Report”

Marek Orzechowski wrote in mainstream Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (6/12): “It took the Swiss Senator Dick Marty seven months to find out he knows nothing. His final report... is a collection of speculation, half-truths and statements not supported by evidence.... Anti-Americanism presented by some European countries knows no limits. Meanwhile terrorists operate globally, they attack in various spots of the world. Therefore, they are hunted everywhere, transported from place to place, and detained in some locations. Certainly, it is against their will, but for our security. It turns out that such reasoning is not enough to the critics of U.S. policy. [They say] that by

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transferring the terrorists from Afghanistan to Bosnia, Americans violate the latter's rights. It would not be so if they issued the terrorists visas and bought them regular air tickets."

"If"

Jan Skorzynski wrote in centrist *Rzeczpospolita* (12/8): "The true or alleged affair about CIA secret prisons for Al Qaeda terrorists is spreading wider and wider. What, at the outset, seemed to be a rumor of little credibility, today is the subject of political talks at the highest level and [a source] of serious concern among the public in Europe. We have a right to be upset. If the revelations of the American media that Al Qaeda leaders were held in Poland prove true, the credibility of Polish politicians who deny them would be questioned.... The most important matter now is to establish facts.... It is an absolute priority for Poland to clear itself of charges as this affair substantially weakens our position in the Union at the moment the future of a long-term EU budget is being decided."

"Far From Certain"

Marcin Bosacki wrote in liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* (12/8): "We are still far from certain whether or not there were detention centers for Al Qaeda terrorists in Poland. The strong denial from the President [Kwasniewski] was a very important step. But I'm afraid it will not dispel all the doubts. If the truth looks as President Aleksander Kwasniewski puts it, if we are right, Poland must do everything to prove it.... Even if not in Poland, that secret detention centers for American services exist is beyond any doubt. To extort confessions, the suspects are tortured there. The White House tried to avoid using torture in the U.S. territory. So it shifted moral and legal responsibility for violating the international Convention Against Torture to its services and to other countries where the prisoners are held. I have always supported the intervention in Iraq that ousted Saddam Hussein, and I still believe in Poland's and Europe's alliance with America. But I want to say clearly: a U.S. Government that shifts forbidden practices to

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other countries behaves deeply immorally. And a country that agrees to this against its interests crosses the line between being an ally and being a lackey.”

“The Issue Of Prisons Harms Poland”

Bartosz Węglarczyk wrote in liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* (12/7): “We do not know whether the reports on the CIA prisons in Poland are true. We are not able to confirm them, we also cannot toss them aside with all certainty.... It can be already seen, though, that the revelations on prisons are increasingly detrimental to Poland. At the time of the [EU] budget discussions, our position in the European Union – where most governments and a substantial part of the public reject the CIA methods as illegal or immoral – is becoming weaker. There is no doubt that this matter increases the threat of a terrorist attack in Poland. If such prisons have never existed, then someone is vilifying Poland in a very dangerous manner. If they have been here, then – depending on one’s views – one should accuse either Polish politicians who agreed to such prisons or those responsible for the leaks for putting Poland in danger. Last Tuesday, the Romanian President strongly denied reports on prisons, saying clearly and categorically that Al Qaeda prisoners have never been and are not held in this country. Until now, we have not heard any such categorical and straightforward denial from the Polish President, Prime Minister, ministers and chiefs of special services. This must immediately change.”

“Torture”

Andrzej Jonas wrote in military weekly *Polska Zbrojna* (11/17): “The only reasonable explanation for placing the prison for the Afghan Taliban in the Guantanamo base is to keep the suspects outside of American territory where U.S. laws should be applied. And above all those provisions which prohibit the use of torture and indefinite imprisonment without trial.... We are evidently dealing with legal tricks aimed at using banned methods on detainees. In other words, those who play such tricks admit law exists and they pretend to abide by the law. Certainly, it is better to have [law] standards as developed by civilization and culture, even though they are violated, than to have

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none. It would be much better if they were not violated. But wouldn't it be naïve to think that people – when faced with real danger in particular – would not reach for unacceptable methods? Especially if they believe that fighting a bigger evil justifies using a lesser evil?"

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